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## VOYAGE IN A SNEAK-BOX.

IN American phraseology, a sneak-box is a species of canoe that can accommodate a single individual, who works his way by oars along the sea-margin, rivers, or lakes. Various, the vessel is styled a duck-boat, perhaps from being employed in shooting wild-ducks. Anyway, it is a canoe or boat of a peculiarly light fabric, but provided with a deck, open at the middle, where the voyager sits in plying his oars, and where, under cover of a hatch, which is closed at night, he can stretch himself out on cushions and go to sleep secure from molestation, while the boat is saved from drifting away by being tethered by a rope to a tree or some other object on shore. A journey by water in this fashion is, of course, attended by dangers and difficulties; but it suits the adventurous spirit of Americans, who, for the sake of frolic and personal independence, do not mind privations or trouble in their expeditions.

Mr N. H. Bishop, who had gained some *éclat* by a long voyage down the great rivers in a paper canoe, increased his fame by accomplishing a voyage in a sneak-box from Pittsburgh, situated between the rivers Monongahela and Alleghany, which here unite to form the Ohio; thence to the Mississippi; and so on to the Gulf of Mexico, a distance of more than two thousand miles. In his book describing this extraordinary excursion, entitled 'Four Months in a Sneak-box,' Mr Bishop wanders into a variety of extraneous details, which are a little embarrassing to the reader; but by skipping over these passages, the narrative is lively and interesting, and offers striking instances of skill and endurance in carrying out what must be called a very whimsical project. We will try to give a sketch of this strange voyage on the great inland waters of the United States. To begin with the boat; it was built to order on the Atlantic coast, and carried by railway to Pittsburgh, where it was launched on the Monongahela, December 2, 1875. The boat measured twelve feet in length, was firmly constructed of white cedar-wood, and so

light that it could easily be lifted by two men, and carried or pushed on rollers across portages, when it was necessary to avoid following a long bend in the river. Beneath the hatch there was room for stowing a change of clothes and a supply of provisions, such as tinned meats, bread, and coffee. There was a kind of shelf which acted as table; and here, reclining on his side, the voyager could write letters or post his log-book. At night, a candle two inches high could be lit without endangering the roof. There were holes for ventilation when the hatch was down. Among the articles accommodated were a few cooking utensils, powder and shot, and a long duck-gun. The heating of water for coffee, and cooking, were conducted on the river-banks.

Mr Bishop lost no time in starting. Off he set at once down the Monongahela, and all went well with him till he came to the junction with the Alleghany, which was filled with cakes of floating ice that dispersed themselves over the Ohio. A boat of ordinary structure would probably have been stove in by the ice-cakes; but the sneak-box being made of elastic timber, coped with the difficulty, and got safely into the central part of the Ohio. The rapid current carried it forward thirty-six miles in four hours and a half. Considering this to be a good day's work, the voyager tied the boat to the shore, and retired under cover for the night. His bed consisted of hair-cushions and a coverlet, while the bag containing his wardrobe served for a pillow. A slice of bread-and-butter, a morsel of preserved meat, and a drink of water, were his supper. He carried no beer or spirits, and appears to be a strictly temperance man, on which account he kept his brain clear for every emergency. Nothing disturbed the silence of the night but the whistle of steamers making their way through the ice-packs. Refreshed by the night's sleep, our voyager despatched a cold breakfast, and was off at half-past eight in the morning. Unfortunately, the atmosphere was so thick with smoke from manufactories, that nothing could be seen of the natural scenery during the day. Keeping clear of

the ice, there was no misadventure. In the afternoon of the second day he passed Wheeling, a busy city, eighty miles from Pittsburgh. The ice now disappeared, but was replaced by oil, which coming from the refuse of oil-mines, unpleasantly covered the water. Cold meals being found not quite agreeable, a small coal-oil stove was purchased. With this simple appliance, coffee was warmed, and there was no further difficulty about cooking. We learn that vast numbers of this species of cheap and easily managed stove are now used all over the western rivers, and have proved an immense comfort to traders and excursionists. 'The economy of its use is wonderful. A heat sufficient to boil a gallon of water in thirty minutes can be sustained for ten hours at the cost of three cents [three-halfpence].' The oil employed is free from any danger of explosion. We have not heard of these handy American oil-stoves being known in England.

Proceeding onwards, a stoppage was made at Moundville, to visit the sepulchral mound of the aborigines from which the name of the place is taken. To see this object of antiquity, the boat was left with the hatch securely locked. The mound, which is nine hundred feet in circumference and seventy feet in height, has been opened up by passages, and found to contain two vaults with skeletons and various copper rings and other antique ornaments. By whom the mound was constructed, remains a mystery. Returning to his boat, the voyager went on his course down the Ohio, passing several islands, and always stopping at night where suitable places could be pitched on out of the reach of steamers. Although prepared for rowing, there was no great necessity for exertion. The current was usually sufficient, and the chief thing required was to keep the boat on its right course, free from obstructions. Thirty to fifty miles a day were commonly made. Sometimes there was chaffing with travellers on board of vessels passing up or down the river. On no occasion was there any attempted violence or interruption. Day followed day very tranquilly. It was a solitary existence, but was free from business cares; and with an abundance of fresh air and mental exhilaration in seeing new scenes come into view, proved exceedingly healthful. The Ohio is generally about half a mile wide, so that there was ample space for guiding the small craft according to pleasure. The day's exercise and vigilance produced sweet sleep when all was closed in for the night. With all its privations, we can fancy this to have been an enviable kind of life.

In England, one can have little idea of the miscellaneous traffic on the great American rivers. Winter is the time for migrating southwards, not only for sake of pleasure, but for trading. There are numerous shanty-boats or scows, flat-bottomed, with a dwelling made of boards on deck, owned by men who with their families make a living by picking up floating lumber, or doing business

with persons on shore as they go along. Dealers in clocks and sewing-machines, tinsmiths, grocers, saloon-keepers, and barbers, are among this migratory population. Some of a more loose class are alleged to be hog-stealers at fitting opportunities. It is not unusual for young men 'out of a job' to club their few dollars to build and equip one of these shanty-boats, and descend to New Orleans 'as negro minstrels, trappers, or thieves, as necessity may demand.' As for food, all rely greatly on salt-pork, bacon, flour, potatoes, eggs, omelets, molasses, and coffee. In nearly every instance, when the parties reach New Orleans, the boats are sold for firewood, and the return voyage is made on board an up-river steamer. Thousands of people spend their lives in this way, trying their luck in going down and up the great rivers. Like flocks of birds, they study the seasons, spending their summers in the north, and wintering in the sub-tropical regions at the mouth of the Mississippi. Such is American river-life, something quite unique. Mr Bishop piloted himself wonderfully down this grand water highway, shanty-boats, steam-vessels, or coal-barges constantly coming into view, and for the most part disposed to be friendly. He, however, kept a sharp look-out, for afloat and on the high river-banks there are roughs who would think no more of sending a ball through him than of shooting a wild-duck.

Approaching Cincinnati, the voyager plied his oars and made considerable way, the state of Ohio on the right, and Kentucky on the left. Hereabouts, in the dark and in a snow-storm, he was compelled by the extreme cold to lock up and leave his sneak-box in a creek, in order to seek shelter and food for the night. Consisting of but a few houses, the place was called Pleasant Run, though anything but pleasant on that dismal night. There was a difficulty in finding any one to give him shelter. At length he tried the house of a German tailor, who after examining him closely, thus addressed him: 'Mine friend, in dese times nobody knows who's which. I say, sar, nobody knows who's what. Fellers land here and eats mine grub, and den shoves off dere poats, and never says: "Tank you, sar," for mine grub. Since de Confederate war, all men is skamps. I fights twenty-doo pattles for de Union, nots for de monish, but because I likes de free government; but it is imbossible to feeds all de beebles what lands at Pleasant Run.' To these remarks, Mr Bishop gave an assurance that he would pay well for food and lodging; and was told in reply: 'Dat's what dey all say.' However, an arrangement was come to, and the benighted excursionist was well treated. The tailor's bark had been worse than his bite.

There was here a compulsory residence for several days. The sneak-box was frozen up and could not move. At length the temperature modified. Moved less by this circumstance than

by a hint that river-thieves had laid a plan for stealing the little vessel, Bishop would stay no longer. Paying his bill and thanking his host, he caused the boat to be cut out of the ice and carried to the navigable part of the Ohio. He was now once more afloat; and in a few days reached Louisville, where he had some difficulty in passing the rapids of the Ohio, and set once more on the right course. In skirting the Indiana shore on the 25th of December, he was hailed from a shanty-boat with a 'Merry Christmas,' and asked to come on board to dinner. The invitation was accepted; and he enjoyed a sumptuous entertainment, for he had that day already rowed fifty-three miles. On the last day of the year he reached the Mississippi at Cairo, and was now on the 'Father of Waters.' Since quitting Pittsburgh, he says, 'the faithful sneak-box had carried me more than a thousand miles.'

There is a peculiar solemnising grandeur in the Mississippi. At Cairo, it has already received the Missouri, which doubles its volume of waters, and gives it a breadth of two to three miles. Although afterwards receiving many large affluents, the breadth is not greatly increased, each fresh accession only adding to its depth. When our voyager entered the Mississippi, the weather was squally, and he was driven to take shelter at Island No. 1, where he dined, and saw the sun come out in all its glory. The great river is noted for its sand-bars, which appear above water, and are the refuge of large flocks of ducks and geese. The islands are known by being numbered on the charts. There are numerous turnings and windings in the river, also partial shiftings of the course on the level plains, owing to inundations. Mooring his boat at Island No. 5, he landed to cook his dinner, which he ate under some giant sycamores, surrounded by a flock of beautiful parrakeets, variegated with green, yellow, and red colours. These birds were an indication that he was entering on a southern clime. Pushing on to the river-side town of Hickman, he added a basketful of mince-pies to his stock of provisions. Forty-five miles farther on, he passed Reelfoot Lake, which was produced by earthquakes in 1811-13, when a large portion of arable land sunk out of sight, and deprived the inhabitants of their farms. Hundreds of square miles were lost by the terrestrial convulsions. Persons interested in geography will be gratified in perusing Mr Bishop's account of Reelfoot Lake. We must pass on to what he says of the cotton-fields and swamps of Louisiana.

In the lower part of the Mississippi, the land would be an earthly paradise but for the frequent overflows, which submerge everything, and produce new channels, transform peninsulas into islands, leave swamps that are malarious, with intermediate stretches of rich 'river-bottoms.' On the higher patches of ground are seen the log cabins of squatters, 'game enough to satisfy the most rapacious, beast and bird of peculiar species, and over all, the immense forests of cypress, sweet-gums, Spanish oaks, tulip-trees, sycamores, cotton-woods, white-oaks, &c.' For the zoologist and botanist, there may be said to be boundless scope for their investigations. As the voyager advanced, the air grew warmer, the heat in January being like that of a July day in the north. Negro cabins with black children scrambling about came

into view. One evening, when Mr Bishop was looking about for a creek where he could halt for the night, he fell in with a flat-boat occupied by a man and his family who were similarly engaged. They halted in company. In the morning, when this new acquaintance departed on his route, he gave his experience of human nature in a sensible piece of advice: 'Don't leave your boat alone for half an hour, stranger. Niggers is bad, and some white folks too.'

In the afternoon of the same day, when floating with the current, our voyager in passing round an island came upon a flat-boat, with which he had exchanged civilities up river. The owner, who is spoken of as the captain, renewed the acquaintanceship. He was a fine type of the enterprising American, and told his history. Reduced to poverty by the war, in order to support his family, he built a scow and set up as a fisherman, penetrating with his vessel into the weird waters of Reelfoot Lake, and despatching the fish that he had caught to remote settlements. In one year he made four thousand dollars. He was now about to visit Northern Texas with his scow, which was to be towed by casual steamers. He would stop here and there to fish with nets, and trap game and ducks; all of which, minus what supported his family, would form his stock in trade among settlers in the Far West. In following out this intention, he scarcely allowed himself any rest, but floated on night and day. He was an educated man, and Mr Bishop found his 'society delightful' during the few days the two kept together. On the voyager went, passing Memphis, Vicksburg, and Natchez. Near the first-mentioned place, the swift current bore him near the shore, where a small masted vessel was anchored, and he heard the cheery cry of 'Stranger, pull in here,' addressed to him by a group of three roughly clad young men, who were engaged in frying salt-pork and potatoes. One of them drew his sneak-box to the bank; and sitting down beside the party, they told him their history. They had been out of work; so, investing sixty dollars in an old sloop of about two tons burden, putting on board a barrel of pork, a barrel of flour, some potatoes, coffee, salt, and molasses—which cargo was to last three months—they started to cut canes in the cane-brakes of White River, Arkansas. These canes were to be utilised as fishing-rods, and being carefully assorted and fastened into bundles, were to be shipped to Cincinnati by steamer, and from there by rail to Cleveland, on Lake Erie, where they would be disposed of. They had come down the Mississippi from Iowa, had been frozen up in creeks, and suffered various other hardships, but looked forward to making a successful adventure. They would be able to cut twenty-five thousand fishing-rods. An excellent specimen this of the scope for enterprise on these great waters.

One of the young men, named Stirling, who was engaged in this trade of gathering cane fishing-rods, related an anecdote illustrative of the administration of justice in these parts. In a river-trip he came upon a steamer which had lost its anchor, and the captain offered to reward him if he could find it. Stirling set to work, and found the anchor with its coil of rope. 'When the steamer returned up-river, he delivered the anchor and coil of rope to the captain, who, intending to defraud the young

man of the promised reward, ordered the mate to cast off the lines. The gong had signalled the engineer to get under way, but not quick enough to escape the young claimant for salvage, who grasped the coil of rope, and dragged it ashore, shouting to the captain: "You may keep your anchor; but I will keep your cable as salvage, to which I am entitled for saving your property." A few days afterwards, Stirling, wishing to know whether he could legally retain the coil of rope, proceeded to a town in the state of Mississippi, to consult a negro justice of peace, said to be learned in the law. Having stated his object, the learned justice said: "Dat's rite, dat's berry good, sah; now you jes macadamise de case to me." The case was "macadamised," or made plain to the sable justice, who, after some meditation, delivered his judgment: "Dis court will apply de common law ob de state ob Mississippi; and dis is it: 'What you hab, dat you keep.' Dis is de teachings ob de bar, de bench, and de code." Stirling was satisfied. He kept the cable.

Again the voyager was on his way down the Mississippi, but was occasionally a little confused as to the route, on account of diverging branches of the great stream. One day he fell in with a gentleman who told him some sorrowful particulars of a Mr John C. Cloud, who had become famous for his feats as an oarsman. Cloud had for a bet rowed in a skiff all the way by rivers from Philadelphia to New Orleans, where he was lost sight of by his friends and admirers. Bishop now heard an explanation of the mystery. The chief sustenance of the unfortunate man was whisky, of which fiery liquor he stowed a jar of ten gallons in his skiff. As a consequence of this indiscretion, and of exposure to malaria, he perished when almost within sight of New Orleans. He was found dead in his boat with the fatal jar at his feet. A kind-hearted planter had the body decently buried.

The end of the river-part of the expedition in the sneak-box was now at hand. Plantations and handsome mansions were in sight. One morning, New Orleans, 'the Crescent City of the Gulf,' with numerous steamers and other vessels, came into view. The time occupied in rowing down the Mississippi from the Ohio had been nineteen days. We let the adventurous voyager give the account of his landing. 'Anxious to escape the officious kindness always encountered about the docks of southern rivers, I peered about, hoping to find some quiet corner in which to moor my floating home. Near the foot of Louisanna Avenue, I saw the fine boat-house of the "Southern Boat Club;" and being pleasantly hailed by one of its members, hove to, and told him of my perplexity. With the ever ready hospitality of a southerner, he assured me that the boat-house was at my disposal; and calling a friend to assist, we easily hauled the boat out of the water up the inclined plane into her new quarters.'

Although the river-excursion was finished, Mr Bishop, after a short stay in New Orleans, of which he gives a pleasant description, caused his sneak-box to be transported to Lake Pontchartrain, whence he made his way to the margin of the Gulf of Mexico. He then rowed along the shore in a northerly direction. At New Orleans he had good-naturedly allowed a young gentleman, whom he

calls Saddles, to accompany him in a separate boat. Mr Saddles turned out to have tastes resembling those of the ill-fated Cloud. Ultimately he broke down, and had to be left behind—another melancholy example of the evils of intemperance. An interesting account is given by Mr Bishop of his sea-coast voyage, with divergences into the rivers and bayous of Florida. He happened to witness alligator-hunting, which is carried on in the southern rivers not so much as a sport as a matter of trade, for sake of the alligator's skin, which is tanned into leather. So great is the destruction of the animal, that in no long space of time the alligator will be extinct in American waters, which, as far as we can see, would be an advantage. At the port of Cedar Keys the excursion terminated, and the voyager with his sneak-box were transferred to a railway train, to be conveyed homewards. The voyage had lasted four months, and had altogether extended to two thousand six hundred miles.

We cannot close our notice of Mr Bishop's entertaining volume, without recommending it as worthy of perusal by all who are fond of reading works of adventure by sea and land. In our opinion, it might be considerably improved by the excision of various redundancies, also by the introduction of dates and an index. It has to be remarked, that although purporting to be published by David Douglas, Edinburgh, the book as regards paper, typography, and wood-cut illustrations, is apparently a product of the American press.

w. c.

## A LIFE'S ATONEMENT.

### CHAPTER XV.—HISTORY.

*Every man plays Hercules at one time or another.*

HASTINGS packed up such of his belongings as seemed needed for a sojourn of a month at Boulogne, and sat down upon his bedside, with a big portmanteau in front of him and a big cigar in his mouth, to look out the train for Dover. The prospect of the jaunt was pleasant to him. As for his debts, they were such old friends that he would have been almost grieved to part with them. Natively, there was no dishonest man in Europe than this flippant and idle young gentleman. Debt at Eton and debt at Cambridge had dulled his moral perceptions—that was all. It would be unfair to blame the man for the faults of a whole system. He had been steeped in credit ever since he had been a little boy. That everybody would be paid and exceedingly well paid one day or other, went of course without saying. The young gentleman justified himself after his usual fashion. 'The poet remarks with great felicity that there is no joy but calm. Very well, then. It is the business of every man to preserve his life from all fluctuations, and to hold himself at one level. Happy is the man who has no history. My highly superior father holds me in poverty at this time, and will one day burden me with great wealth. It is my double duty to get into debt. To-day's debt feeds yesterday's depletion, and provides a relief beforehand for the repletion of to-morrow. Aha! 'Tis quaintly, wittily, and wisely put. Credit is the compensating balance of the whole system of human affairs. Good again.'



Resuming the study of the time-table, suspended in behalf of these reflections, Hastings was startled by an unusually imperious knock at the front door. A foreboding touched him in the midst of his easy gaiety. The door below was opened, and by-and-by the neat and rosy housemaid appeared with a message for him, to the effect that Mr Robins of Deal desired to see him.

'Robins of Deal, and Robins of Deal,' said Hastings rhythmically in a sort of pensive chant. 'And who the dickens is Robins of Deal?—Shew the old gentleman up, my dear, as the ardent inquirer said to Cornelius Agrippa.'

The rosy housemaid, who was of opinion that Mr Hastings was the most perfect of his sex, turned up the sitting-room lamp and went downstairs. Then the visitor came up with solemn tramp; and Hastings walking airily into the sitting-room, saw before him an old and faithful servitor of his father's—a servitor so old that he had been pantry-boy in the great house at Dean when his present master was a boy at Eton.

'Why, Roberts, my good old boy,' said Hastings, shaking hands with him, 'what brings you to the brick and mortar wilderness? The girl said Mr Robins of Deal wanted to see me.'

'I told her to say it was Roberts from Dean, Mr Arthur,' said the old man solemnly.

'I am very glad,' said Hastings, looking with real pleasure at the white-haired, rosy, plump, old fellow's face—'very glad indeed you found me. I am just off for the continent.'

'You must come back with me, Mr Arthur,' said the old boy with a solemn shaky voice.

'Is there anything the matter at home?'

'It is appointed to all men, Mr Arthur,' said the ancient butler with a voice more and more tremulous. 'It's your poor father's turn, sir, now.'

Hastings sat down without an exclamation, and looked hard at his visitor.

'He wouldn't have any of us wire, sir,' said the old man, 'for fear of startling you. A letter wouldn't have reached you till the morning, and that might have been too late. So he said to me: "Go and bring him down, Roberts. I shall last till he comes," he said, sir; "I must last till he comes!"'

Hastings still said not a word, but rang the bell. The rosy housemaid answering stood astonished at the paleness of his countenance. He ordered refreshments to be placed before the butler, and then left him and went into the solitude of his own room. Standing there, and staring listlessly into the dark and silent street, he groped in his own mind for the meaning of the message which had just been brought to him. He turned his eyes vacantly upon the table near which he stood, and took thence a book in a yellow paper cover, and vacantly read a paragraph. This book was the production of a Frenchman of genius. I will not blame but pity that great personage, who was a godless, heartless, bloodless cynic, with a rollicking sense of humour which never found food for a smile in anything that was not either cruel or dirty. The paragraph which Hastings thus vacantly read set forth with jocund plesantries the delight experienced by a young man at a wealthy father's death. As the meaning of the writer became clear to him, he tore the flimsy volume passionately in pieces and dropped them on the floor. The old

man tapped at the door, but Hastings did not hear him. He gazed gloomily out of the window on the dark street until the old servitor's touch aroused him. 'Roberts,' he said, with some bitterness at his heart, 'I declare I feel this almost as much as you do.'

'I know, Mr Arthur,' said the butler. 'There's different ways of feeling, and different ways of shewing it.'

'Is there no hope of his recovery?' Hastings asked, turning to the window.

'No hope at all, sir,' the butler answered.

'When does our train start?' Hastings asked again.

'I've told Hoskins to meet the Hetherton train, one hour and twenty minutes after midnight, sir,' the butler answered. 'It leaves Euston in about an hour and a half.'

'Very well,' said Hastings. 'Leave me alone for a minute or two, Roberts. Get something to eat. I shall be quite ready.'

The butler retired; and Hastings stared on vacantly through the window. 'Have I a heart at all?' he asked himself. 'I don't believe I care the toss up of a blind beggar's farthing. I don't believe it's in me to care; and if it isn't, it shall not be in me to pretend I care. Poor old governor! He'd have cared if he'd heard that I was dying.'

His heart was hardened, and his eyes were dry. He thought of things which were so ridiculous that he could have laughed outright at them. The great Frenchman himself could not have been inwardly wittier than poor Hastings, over all the cruelties of his own want of feeling. He could not help it for his life. He could not feel sorry. He did not feel sorry. He was never merrier than at this time; and just as he had arrived at this conclusion, he dropped his head into his hands and wept bitterly. He was a very young man, my readers will remember, and his father, who lay dying, had loved him well and forgiven him often. The faithful old servitor without, dropped tears into his tea as he sat there in his young Master's room, and heard the sobs which shook him.

The two mourners took the train together, and arrived too late. The old man was dead; and his son, that dissipated youngster, was master of Dean Manor and broad lands adjoining. Yet it was not these things which filled the heart which would have fain believed itself so flippant and cynical. No, no! He lay there, the gray old man, who would be grieved no more, yet had been grieved so often. Even cunning Antony cries out, 'My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, and I must wait till it come back to me.' There was some nature there, or the mob would not have been moved by it. And so Hastings' heart lay there with the dead father, and had no concern with Dean Manor and broad lands adjoining, unless it were to fear in the sincerity of grief that these things would bring in time a consolation of which it would be an honest man's duty to feel ashamed. The will of the dead man was read after the funeral, and except for liberal legacies to the old servants, everything came into the hands of the son. He was free to go back now and use London like a hog-pen or other place to wallow in. He could give his vices that looked like virtues, and his virtues that looked like vices, full swing on such a princely income as his father had left him.

I would defy you to make a Square-toes of this young gentleman, but he is not past making an honest man of. The father's death sobered the son, and brought responsibilities upon him. The old fables are full of wisdom. Every man plays Hercules at one time or another, if it be but for an hour, and the two goddesses solicit him. Happy is he who plays the parable through to the end and chooses after Hercules his fashion. That better choice our young Hastings made. It was not in the heart of him to be a Pharisee. He will have his joke to the end of his life, and will not forget, though he grow wise, the flavours of Clos de Vougeot and Habana. There will be cakes and ale even for him who is pious, and ginger shall still be hot in the mouth.

But there is a time for all things, and this was the time for sober thought and honest resolution. He would play Prince Hal no more. Brookes and Bonder, Poins and Bardolph, and that hoary sinner Falstaff, who dwelt in the dingy parlour of the 'fancy' public, that battered hero of the fistic ring, should have seen the last of the Prince's revelry. To purge, to quit sack, and live cleanly—it is a holy task, and the young fellow who goes out to it will have all honest men's sympathy.

Hastings could not bear to closet himself with his dead father's lawyer directly after the old man had been laid beside his ancestors in the family vault. He felt that he could better give himself a little time for thought, and even a little time for grief, before he took up the burdens of his new position. And there seemed to him a something sordid in hastening to lay hands upon that which bore yet freshly the impress of a hand which could grasp earthly riches no more. Therefore he went up to London, and whilst old acquaintances read gleefully that the will was proved, and that the personality was sworn under some quite exceptional number of thousands, he was living alone and thoughtful in his old London rooms. It happened on the night on which he returned to town that he thought of Frank, and took a cab to drive round to him. 'It was more than half my fault,' he thought to himself, 'that Fairholt fell into that man's hands. If he is in any trouble, I must help him out of it.'

And once more he found himself too late. Mr Fairholt had just gone out. Hastings then pencilled this brief note:

'DEAR FAIRHOLT—If you are in any trouble about Tasker, let me know. One word from me will quiet him. Yours always, A. H.'

This he folded and sealed, and having discharged his duty in that one matter, went home again. Cynical and flippant as he thought himself, his heart was very tender just then, and the look even of lifeless things reproached him. The walls that had heard his follies reproached him. He arose and went into the streets. It rained in a half-hearted drizzling way, and he felt lonely and troubled and dispirited. It mattered little to him whither he went, so that he could but walk off this fit of unusual depression, and he found himself almost before he knew it in the midst of all the light and bustle of Oxford Street. Turning thence into quieter ways, he wandered on until somebody fell against him with a shock, and drove his crape-bound hat over his eyes. He recovered himself, and saw a drunken Irishman, who offered fluent

apologies. 'For barrin' him,' the man was saying, 'there's not a creature in the world that oi'd lay a little finger on except in the way o' good-fellowship. Will ye take a dhrink? Just to shew there's no ill feelin'? Dew now!'

'No, thank you,' said Hastings, and walked on.

The man clung to him with repeated apologies and repeated hospitable offers. 'Well,' said his follower at last, 'I dar'n't go tew far away, lest oi should be missin' me friend. If ye won't, ye won't, me boy; an' so, good-noight to ye.'

'Good-night,' Hastings answered; and the man turned back and lurched down the street. The rain had ceased, and Hastings stood folding his umbrella in dreamy mood, with a sad little laugh at the man's persistent attempt to drink with him. Suddenly, not fifty yards away, there arose a terrific hubbub, and wild cries for help. Towards Hastings, like a dart, ran a stout little figure with guttural yells of 'Murder!' Behind him, gaining at every stride, came the man who had said 'Good-night' only a minute or two before. What the meaning of the pursuit might be, Hastings had no power to divine. It seemed probable that it was a piece of drunken sport on the part of both men, for it was impossible that they should have had time to quarrel since the Irishman had left him. But the cruel blow which felled the fugitive was real enough, and so was the murderous knife that gleamed above his prostrate figure. Hastings was just in time to bring his umbrella down full swing upon the Irishman's wrist. The knife fell upon the pavement, and the umbrella-stick went to shivers. The man was up in a second, and rushed at Hastings like a bull. It was all uneven. Not half-a-dozen years of foolish living in London and Paris had robbed the prettiest boxer of his day at Cambridge of his style. The tale is as old as the hills. Hastings could not hurt the man severely even had he wished. But on the other hand, the man could not get near him, and his savage rushes were exhausting him and knocking him about a good deal. A gentleman came out of the house in front of which this little drama was enacting.

'Pray, oblige me by picking up this poor fellow,' said Hastings quietly, opposing the frantic Irishman with wary foot and hand and eye. 'I found this fellow trying to murder him. There's a knife somewhere.'

At the mention of the knife, the Irishman made a rush for the prostrate figure. Hastings dropped in front of him like lightning, and the man went flying over the stooping figure, came down heavily upon the pavement, and lay still. The whole thing had not lasted two minutes.

'Very neat indeed,' said the gentleman on the door-step; and at that moment a constable came with placid mien round the corner.

'Hillo!' said the official; 'move on here!—I beg pardon, sir. What's the matter?' Before the constable had well made this inquiry, the gentleman had left the door-step, and was bending over the figure of the portly little man who had been first to fall in this affray.

'Ha!' he said; 'this is my friend the money-lender, is it?—Help me to carry this man into the hall, policeman.' The policeman lent a pair of hands, and the figure of the portly little man was carried indoors. 'Now for the other.' At that

moment of time an elderly fat man came round the corner, and stood still to watch the proceedings. There was blood upon the whitened doorstep of the house into which the one man had been carried, and the two gentlemen and the policeman were stooping to raise the Irishman, who lay like one dead doubled against the area railings. The thing were altogether a melodramatic aspect, and any elderly fat man passing at the time would have been phlegmatic indeed had he not paused to look. The fat man hovered round the three as they bore the insensible figure into the hall, and breathed stertorously in his eager interest. He followed to the door, and there fell into an attitude expressive of profound amazement. Nobody had noticed him, and it is not probable indeed that anybody so far had even seen him. There was a general start when he cried out aloud: 'Why, bless my heart alive if that ain't my man, Tasker!'

'You know him?' said the gentleman of the house, looking up for a second, and then busying himself about the insensible head again.

'Look here, policeman,' said Benjamin Hartley. 'You go for a doctor.'

The policeman smiled and whispered: 'This is Dr Brand, one of the most eminent surgeons of the day.'

'Ah!' said Mr Hartley, 'that's fort'nate.' Then he looked at Hastings. 'You seem to ha' been in this here shindy, young gentleman.'

'For once in a way,' responded he, shaken back into his old ways by the incident; 'fact and appearance travel together. I *have* been in this here shindy.'

'What's it all about?' asked Mr Hartley, regarding his new acquaintance with some surprise.

'I am really unable to say,' said Hastings calmly. 'The big man ran after the little one, knocked him down, and drew a knife.—By the way—turning to the officer—'you will find a knife and a hat outside. Will you oblige me?'—The policeman turned away to the door—'And an umbrella,' added Hastings.

'Was it you,' asked Mr Hartley, 'as doubled up that cove like that? Again' the railings?'

'I had to do it, you know,' said Hastings; and Benjamin Hartley stared at him, and wondered. He measured with his eye the figure of the prostrate Irishman, and then looked back at Hastings, with flaxen moustache and flaxen hair and girlishly delicate complexion. A deep-drawn breath and a slow exclamation 'Ah!' bore testimony to his amazement.

Dr Brand hearing this brief colloquy, chuckled within himself. Rising to his feet he said: 'This man is rather severely hurt. He ought to be removed to the hospital.' A slight examination of the second figure resulted in a similar verdict. 'I know the man too,' said the Doctor. 'His name is Closky, and he lives in Bolter's Rents in Oxford Street.' This was addressed to the officer, who had found the knife, and was now offering to Mr Hastings his battered properties.

'There is no danger, I hope?' said Hastings.

'It will not be possible to say anything about that in either case for a day or two,' the Doctor answered. The policeman was despatched for stretchers and bearers, and the two disabled men were soon deposited at the hospital. The Doctor

promised to call there in the morning; and he and Hastings and old Hartley solemnly exchanged cards. Then the old man went off with Hastings to the hospital to see that Tasker was well bestowed. The two took a cab, and so arrived some time before the wounded. Whilst they waited, the house-surgeon—who knew of Mr Hartley of Hartley Hall, and had heard of him from afar as a sort of Gentile Rothschild—was overwhelmingly polite, and the old gentleman was full of enthusiasms for Hastings' pluck and prowess. It reminded him—so he said with fatherly pride—of his son the Lieutenant when he was at Cambridge. 'Was that Hartley of Jesus?' asked Hastings. 'It was sir,' the old man answered, beaming. Did Hastings know the Lieutenant?—Hastings had that distinguished pleasure.

The old man referring to his card again, cried out: 'Why sir, you an' me's neighbours, if I ain't mistaken.'—Hastings assented.—'I shall be proud to see you, sir, at Artley All. My son the Lieutenant'll be at home at Christmas-time; and my son Orrie Sinjin, of Jesus, Cambridge, also. May we look to see you there, sir? No fuss; no show, sir; but a very hearty welcome, I am sure.'

Hastings would be delighted. He liked the old man's bluff hearty ways, and his low-comedy gentility, and his innocent bounce and brag.

'Three generations, you know, sir,' said the old gentleman with hearty candour. 'That's the rule, sir. My young fellers don't make a bad show for the second. Two as fine young chaps as you'd wish to look at.' This to the house-surgeon, who nodded with some embarrassment.

The wounded men came in at this juncture, and the house-surgeon gave them the benefit of his skill without delay. He called Mr Hartley's attention to the fact that Tasker's jewelry seemed valuable. 'Yes,' said the old gentleman in answer; 'but he was in the habit of carrying about papers which were still more valuable, and it would be as well to make sure that they were taken due care of.' Saying this, he took hold of Tasker's coat and emptied the pockets. Amongst other things appeared a very fat pocket-book, the clasp of which was insecure. The book opened in the old man's hand, and a number of papers fell upon the floor. Hastings stooped and picked up some of them, one of which he crumpled in his hand, unseen, and held there.

'Hillo!' cried Mr Hartley; 'here's that cheque of mine, that he ought to ha' paid over a week ago.—I can't take this away with me; can I?' he asked the policeman, who stood beside him.

The official said that was impossible; and the old man, in a state of considerable excitement and anger, called for pen and ink, and producing a cheque-book, filled up a cheque in favour of Francis Fairholt, Esquire, for four hundred guineas. Hastings smoothed out the piece of crumpled paper he had held in his hand until now, and laid it before Mr Hartley. It was a bill for ninety-eight pounds ten shillings, two days overdue, payable at Lord and Hobbes's Bank, Lombard Street, and drawn on Francis Fairholt by Aminadab Tasker.

'Hillo!' cried Mr Hartley again; 'this is a game!—Why, Mr Tasker, he muttered in a lower voice, 'you've been a-detaining of my cheque for something, have you! Very well, sir—very well.

When you come round again, I'll have a little deal along of you, as you'll remember.'

'I knew of this, Mr Hartley,' said Hastings in a low tone, laying his finger on the bill, 'and I knew that Tasker held your cheque for Fairholt. Frank is my best friend, sir; and I went round to-night to tell him that he need not be troubled about this.' He laid his finger again upon the bill.

'Thank you, sir,' said the old man. 'I know that scoundrel, sir. I've told him long ago as if he had any more dealings with Mr Fairholt I'd break him. I'll go away at once to the poor lad's place and pay him this 'ere cheque. There's three days' grace allowed on this dockment,' said Mr Hartley, 'as perhaps you know, Mr Hastings, and there's no danger till to-morrow.'

'May I come with you to Fairholt's place?' asked Hastings.

Hartley gave a ready assent; and they drove away together. The old gentleman swore as terribly as our army did in Flanders, and poured forth threats against the unconscious Tasker. He blamed himself for employing Tasker at all, but excused himself on the ground that 'there's allays a deal o' dirty work to do in business.' 'I shouldn't wonder,' he shouted, as the cab jolted over the stone pavements, 'if that feller as dropped on to him to-night wasn't somebody as he'd ruined.' Hastings shouted in return that this was very likely true; and Hartley lay back and muttered new threats and anathemas. They reached in due time the house in which Frank lived, and learned that he had not yet returned. Mr Hartley asked for an envelope, and inclosed the cheque with one line—'In payment for picture.—B. H.' Then he turned into the street, still very angry. 'I know what lads are like, sir,' he said, 'I've got two young chaps o' my own, an' one o' 'em suffered dreadful through this kind o' thing. And here's a 'igh-minded, sensitive young feller very likely a-breaking his heart through this scoundrel. Well, well, it'll be a warnin' to him maybe. All's well as ends well. He'll be all right to-morrow.—Shall I set you down anywhere, Mr Hastings?'

The two found that their ways were apart, and so bade each other good-night.

'I like that odd old fellow,' said Hastings to himself. 'He's new enough; but the new heraldry is hands and hearts. I shall look him up some day.' Then he fell to thinking of Frank, and made up an honest mind to give his old friend some good advice, and monetary help if need were, though that seemed unlikely. Frank was about to marry old Hartley's niece, and Hastings, like the rest of the world, knew that the builder and owner of Hartley Hall had a colossal fortune.

Mr Hartley also was preparing good advice for Frank, and was ready to offer monetary aid if need were. 'I must come down heavy on him,' the old man thought as he lay back in his cab, 'and frighten him out of these wicked ways.' There was no sin like carelessness in money matters, in Benjamin Hartley's eyes. Even dishonesty would have been little more reprobated by this good old heathen of a millionaire, for that did but shew a perversion of the most estimable of human instincts—the desire to be rich.

Whilst these two friends of his were pondering

that good advice and planning that monetary aid which were never to be given, Frank was standing in the night alone at the edge of Hampstead Heath. The wind moaned and the rain fell drearily. A rebellious rage against his evil fortune, a passion of regret for bygone follies, an unspeakable terror of the morrow, and through all these, such real dread of the grief which was coming upon those who loved him—rage, remorse, fear, and love—these four—did battle within his soul. And the wide heath, with the rain and the wind and the night upon it, lay before him like a threat of his own future, storm-tormented, untouched by any ray of light from earth or heaven.

#### A GERMAN FOREST VILLAGE.

Nor far from the entrance to the Gottschlagthal, many miles from the railway that skirts the north-west of Baden, lies a secluded village. To this, its distance from a well-worn travellers' highway, it owes perhaps its chief charm—its reticence and silence, its pleasant old-world ways. One reaches it by a wide valley, from which the rounded, pine-crowned hills stand well away, leaving a sunlit breadth of grassy uplands, through which the river winds with murmurous singing. In the very heart of this greenness nestles Kappel, a village of two straggling streets, made gay on market-days with a gleam of scarlet petticoat and waistcoat, and lively with much guttural speech. But Kappel, spite its pleasant white wine, its deep crimson roses, its ruined castle perched far above it, or its houses—low-roofed and black-beamed, such as painters love—holds no charm for you, and you pass onwards up the narrowing valley, where the dark hills draw nearer to each other, and the stream flows between lessening margins.

It is never lonely, though one feels as if it led nowhere, this 'happy valley'; for to the right and to the left against the fringe of wood are perched snug homesteads with deep penthouse of golden-brown thatch, which almost conceals the narrow windows in which the marigolds and peonies are glowing, and with slopes of fragrant meadow-land in front, over which the summer wind shivers lightly. Now and then a peasant, a quaint figure in short-waisted coat of some shining black stuff, and red vest, is to be met, suiting his pace to that of his slow oxen; and he is sure to give you a *Guten Abend* as he looks at you with friendly curiosity. Then there is a level space of road when you limit your vision on one side to the straggling hedgerow, bearing a burden of all sweet things, and to the rapid flow of the impetuous river on the other; but in a little while there are signs of men again; for here is the saw-mill to drown the river's voice, and the farmhouse with its tangled garden and vine-covered trellis set against the road. Soon these too are left behind; and by a winding way, over whose very margin the pines fling their broad shadows, you wander on, having deep glimpses into the heart of the wide forest, that gained for this dark land in Cæsar's time its name of *Silva Nigra*. And it is after all quite suddenly that you come upon the half-dozen irregular broad-eaved houses, standing a little apart from each other, that form the village you seek. An inn or two, which the peasants



frequent ; the barber's shop, with its sign dangling above the door, and flowers in all the windows ; the wide black forge, holding its glowing heart of fire ; children at shrill-voiced play by the river ; men and women who straighten bowed backs to look and exchange a friendly greeting as you pass—that is all. Then with a sharp bend to the left comes the narrow bridge that spans the wayward river, broken here into a hundred miniature cascades by the moss-grown boulders that impede its path ; and while its voice is yet sounding in your ears, you have reached the *Gasthaus zum Ochsen*. Your pleasant pilgrimage is over, for this is its goal.

You stand a moment to look about you. In front of you lies the wide country, fair and still under the evening light. And yet it is a landscape made up of very homely elements. Sombre woods which climb and crown the hills, tinted here and there to a brighter green with the young growth of the spring ; smiling slopes where the sunlight lingers ; quiet homesteads where generations have lived out their simple uneventful lives, looking on the same upland pastures where the cattle feed, hearing the same rushing waters. Under the ample roofs the beehives stand in a row ; oxen loosed from their yokes, pass under the wide archways ; the thin blue thread of wood-smoke curls upwards and hangs in the still air. A little higher up the hill, beyond the pond which mirrors the placid sky, stands the little church, its white belfry clearly defined against the background of wood. You turn from it lingeringly to the low white house behind you, its many windows open to admit the evening freshness, and to the wide court where the pigeons plume themselves upon the sunny wall.

If former experience of hotel life has led you to expect and to desire the attendance of obsequious white-neckclothed waiters and smart chamber-maids, then the *Ochsen* is no home for you. But if you care to abandon yourself for a little space to a life of very simple pleasures, among a people as yet unspoiled by contact with the outer world, then pass beneath the vine-covered porch. For come as you will, in hired carriage, in diligence, or on foot, you will find here a ready welcome. Mine host will advance to meet you, and reach a broad hand to clasp yours ; his comely Frau awaits you on the threshold, and herself leads you to that pleasant chamber under the eaves, in at whose open casements comes the scent of the linden tassels. Sons and daughters of the house will anticipate with smiling readiness the wants which your stammering tongue refuses to translate for you. Here you may experience the rare and pleasant sensation of being received for your own sake, not for the amount of gold with which you may swell the landlord's coffers—a guest whom he delights to honour.

They wait upon you themselves, those handsome friendly young people, while you sup in the brown low-roofed room, adorned with gaily coloured prints of saints and martyrs. Between the courses, while you sip your glass of white wine, they will sit beside you and entertain you in kindly fashion. Very soon you are able to distinguish between Karl and Fritz, and have even a dim suspicion that other eyes than those of her brothers' have found out that Fräulein Gretchen

is very fair. Before your meal is ended, you will have had an outline of their uneventful history ; and unless you have more than your share of English reticence, they will have learned something of yours. Presently, they will shew you the visitors' book, where among crabbed and twisted hieroglyphics which you cannot hope to decipher, you discover the signature of a former Smith or Brown who lodged here, and recorded his sentiments in British German ; but the date is eight or ten years back, and out of the photograph of your fellow-countryman which Fräulein Grete brings you, there looks at you an unknown face.

If, while you lean back for a moment to enjoy your sense of comfort and well-being, your eyes stray to the dark corner where the old square piano stands, one of the bright faces near you will certainly kindle into sudden enthusiasm ; and if you so will it, the rest of your evening may be spent in the rare company of Beethoven and Handel and Bach. As the quick firm touch falls upon the notes, the sweet strains seem to act as a magnet ; for presently the host enters, cigar in mouth, and seats himself in the wooden arm-chair ; the good Frau, the sleeves of her cotton jacket still rolled up, comes forth for a moment from the dark recesses of the kitchen ; and about the open door there gathers a dim and shadowy company ; stray passers on the highway perhaps, or the village folks who drop in of an evening to drink their half-bottle of red wine in the *Gaststube* across the passage. Sometimes it is Fräulein Grete who sings ; and then the refrain of the *Volkstied* is unflinching taken up by the outer listeners, and swells into a pleasant wave of melody. Time in this quiet place glides by to the sound of music. The hostler sings as he rubs down his horses ; Fritz sets the coffee-cups to a refrain of Schubert's ; you are awakened in the fresh early morning by the strains of a waltz which some one thumps out merrily in the guest-room beneath you. And as you rise and throw open your casement to let in the new brilliance of the day, you feel that the lines have fallen to you in pleasant places. Here, for a smaller sum than is spent upon a single meal in London, you may live from day to day upon the fat of the land. Your weekly bill is so modest that you discharge it almost with a sense of shame ; it leaves you a debtor still for many kindnesses which gold cannot repay.

As you linger on beneath the lindens, you watch the slow procession of events that make up the daily life of this forest village. While you drink your coffee the school-children troop past, bright-eyed little lads and maidens, bare-headed, and for the most part bare-footed too, their quick tread falling almost noiselessly on the white road. With a slow creak come the ox-carts, burdened with a load of pine-logs ; the blue-bloused peasant cracks his whip, and they cross the bridge at a quicker pace. From an upland meadow a woman drags a load of fresh-cut grass ; the *Pastor* in his long flapping robes strides down the hill, and pauses a moment to lay his hand on the head of the child who clings to his skirts. Now and then, on Sunday or feast-day, there is a procession. At these times, when the bell in the little belfry set against the wood sends out its one thin note, the crowd begins to thicken on the white road. From the meadows by the river, from the heart of the forest, from distant houses hidden among

the hills, they come. There is a gleam of blue and purple and scarlet as they pass; the uplifted banners are stirred by the soft air, and the slow monotonous chant fills all the valley. Sometimes there is a sadder pilgrimage to the church on the verge of the wood, where stands a new coffin with lights burning about it, and thence to the sloping hillside, sown thick with little iron crosses, but lying very pleasantly to the sun. At eleven o'clock comes the great event of the day, when with a jingle of bells and a sudden crash of wheels, the diligence draws up before the door of the *Ochsen*. Then you may begin to speculate on the number of letters it has brought for you; or if these fail you, you glean news of the outer world through the pages of the *Kölnische Zeitung* which Fritz brings you. When your interest in German politics flags, you concentrate it on the new arrivals, who share with you the shade of the cloudy linden foliage, and are already clinking their beer-glasses.

You will find them very ready to be friendly, these young students from Carlsruhe, to whom the *Ochsen* is familiar ground. At the early dinner-table they will introduce themselves in manly fashion, stating name and occupation and dwelling-place; and then, if you will and dare, you may venture beyond the *Guten Appetit* and the *Gesegnete Mahlzeit* which it is incumbent on you to utter at the beginning and end of each meal. Often the diligence brings older travellers, who love the silent charm of this quiet valley; and with all of these you may have the pleasantest intercourse, for the 'intelligence' which won for the Fatherland its later distinctions on the battlefield leavens all classes of society in Germany.

When you tire of the talking—and certainly there is a great deal of it—you may wander out into the woods, of which you never weary. Under these straight trunks you pass from lavish sunshine to intensest shade, broken rarely by a gleam that travels down the gray stems and flickers on the moss. Here you may linger for hours and hear no sound but your own footfall, or the soft murmur of the wind far above you. Once and again you come upon signs of a charcoal-burner's deserted encampment; but if you would see the woodcutters at work, you must mount upwards by the winding forest-paths that lead to the crown of the hill. And having emerged from these green aisles and reached this freer air, you may well forget your sense of weariness; for here on all sides of you, like the billows of a frozen sea, rise the green-clad hills wave upon wave, black in the hollows, but emerald in the sunlight. The village lies at your feet warm and sheltered; and on the other side where the valley widens, there stretches in the far distance a wide reach of level land, which you know to be the fair plain of Alsace, but which in the noontide heat you dream to be a glistening summer sea, with islands and jutting shores and sailing ships.

And so with the June days you linger on in this pleasant land, where surely the sunsets are rosier and the day dawns fairer than elsewhere. On midsummer day they begin to cut the first crop of meadow-hay. It is a pretty sight to see the long ranks falling before the mower's scythe, though you grudge the death of the flowers, that made all the wayside a bright mosaic of blended colours. From this time you see less of your hosts, unless

you choose to take part in that busy scene by the river, where the women—bare armed and footed—toss the hay, while the men rake it together and fill the great wooden carts. A boy stands with a green branch in his hand to shield the patient cattle from the flies. Then when the last load is hoisted, and the ropes made fast, with many an oburgation, the team gets under way; the deep rutts are safely passed, and with a sigh of relief, the owner sees his wealth pass onwards to the great barn. When the last precious load is safely stored, and the workers are set free, you may join the young people in one of the many excursions with which they enliven the quiet days. Perhaps you scramble into the *Leiterwagen*, and are jostled merrily over the sunny roads to some other hidden village nestling among the woods, where *Grossvater* and *Grossmutter*, who have a *Wirthschaft* of their own, receive you with simple dignity, and set before you the best the house can offer.

You are familiar by this time with these peasant homes—the dark low-roofed rooms, with the polished wardrobe in one corner, and the stove with quaint Scripture scenes—the sacrifice of Isaac or the judgment of Solomon—represented on it in relief. You remember them all: the farmhouse high upon the hill, where you had many a draught of new milk out of a blue two-handled jar, and ate of black bread on which the housewife had first devoutly made the sign of the cross; the *Burgmeister's*, with the deep thatched eaves and the narrow windows, whence you had that fair prospect of climbing vineyards and distant wood. You remember them all, and think with regret that you have seen them and their simple kindly owners for perhaps the last time. For as the June days lessen one by one, you feel that you too must turn your steps from this quiet spot. With July and August will come grave professors and merry students, and households set free for a space from city life, and there will be dancing and merry-making in the guest-room of the *Ochsen*.

But you leave it as you found it, this your home of many weeks, full of a silent restful peace that will always cling about it in your memory. You turn away sadly from these new-old friends, who crowd about the door to wish you God-speed, and you climb the dusty way, leaving them behind. The orange light lies in long level bands between the dark hills; the woods are growing sombre-tinted; and as you turn for one last backward glance, the first star burns in the pale sky above you. Night has come o'er the forest village. *Au révoir.*

## THE BELLS OF YARRICK.

A PROSE IDYLL, IN THREE SCENES.

### SCENE III.

SURELY Yarrick looks at its best in autumn! Foregrounds of ruddy loam, which has turned over obedient to the gentle persuasion of the ploughshare, exhaling delicious perfume; middle distances of waving gold, which the whispering breezes move gently to receive the play of lights and shadows; backgrounds of stony gray, running off into tender green and shadowy purple where the heather spreads its carpet; in the far distance the gleam of the waters of Boardsey

dancing in the glinting sunlight; spanning all, the limpid azure canopy, flecked with clouds soft as snowflakes, and ever changing into new and beautiful combinations.

Martha Prout combines in her comfortable person two distinct offices; she ministers at the Vicarage as both cook and housekeeper. There being no culinary problems to engage her attention to-day, she sits under a great apple-tree in the orchard knitting a stocking, and ever and anon gazing up with approbation at the branches bowing with their bountiful load. All the morning she has been making preparation for the return of the Vicar, who for the last two months has been sojourning abroad. This afternoon it is exceptionally warm, and as Martha sits in her comfortable wicker chair catching the sunshine straying through the network of boughs above, she nods over her stocking. Hard by, the pigeons coo amorously in the veranda of their elevated little residence. A lark, pouring out from its heart ecstatic melody, mounts upward into the azure concave. A great bumble-bee comes droning along through the air, aimlessly, after the fashion of its kind. 'I can't abide 'em!' Martha says, holding her head back in trepidation, and inspecting the insect through her spectacles; 'they deu make a body's flesh creep! Alays did mine sin' I's a child.' Then, after a stitch or two, the melody of summer sounds soothes her, and she half closes her eyes. She hears the voice of one far off singing over his hedging and ditching; the air is catching, and Martha, sleepily following it, feels personally affronted at the utterance of a false note. 'Bless the boy, what's he fit for! Lived i' Yarrick all's life, and can't sing Pegwell Peggy yet!' The subject of the stricture comes to the end of his bar, and devotes his attention to his spade and bill-hook, and the musical critic is left in peace. Succumbing to the soothing influence of all around, Martha Prout slumbers.

Enters into the orchard a man, soldierly in bearing, dark brown of hue. One of the sleeves of his coat is doubled and stitched to the shoulder, the limb for which it was made being absent. He pauses for a moment, and looks about, then spying Martha, makes towards her. She, hearing a footstep, clutches convulsively at her knitting-needles, then recovers.

'How yeu deu startle a body, Dennis!'

'Been havin' a snooze, Martha?' inquires Dennis amicably.

The aspersion ruffles Martha's plumage. 'No; I han't!' she replies. 'Reckon I know my place better! I've told yeu afore that we han't got none o' they injin ways i' Yarrick.' And she emphasises her sarcasm with a sniff.

'Don't yeu mind me, Martha,' says Dennis soothingly. 'I thought as 'twas warm-like, and yeu havin' alays been of a full habit o' body'—

This is more than mortal flesh can bear; and the outraged Martha rises majestically. 'Perhaps yeu'll 'scuse me pullin' yeu up short, Dennis Ladbroke, an' tellin' yeu that yeu an't no longer dwellin' among black infidels an' sich-like.' And Martha shakes out her skirt venomously, as though to draw attention to that emblem of civilisation.

'Why, bless the woman!'—

'I would at least be civil-spoke, an' not use low words,' interrupts the exasperated handmaiden.

'Come, come, Martha; yeu mustn't take offence where none's meant. Yeu needn't be so contrairy—to-day of all days too!'

Martha appears subdued. 'That's tren,' she says in a mollified tone. Dennis's reference has recalled her thoughts.

'Feel as though I can't stay still to-day, Martha; seems somehow to have been such a skurry at the last,' says Dennis, sitting down on a stump of wood. 'All's ready now,' he continues, stroking his chin thoughtfully. 'They tell me the new bells are sweeter-toned than the old, though that can't well be. The lads say they'll give Yarrick such a peal as it's never heard before.'

'La, Dennis! what a surprise 'twill be for the master! Reckon he'll feel main sally, poor dear.'

'That's like enough, Martha.'

Dennis's thoughts stray back. 'Master Gerald thought of this day,' he says half aloud.

'Bless him!' says Martha softly; then adds, after a pause: 'I've been at they chairs all the mornin', an' they shine just beautiful; come an' see 'em, Dennis.' And they go in together.

'Miss Ella's often spoke of him sin' the news of his death came to us. How her pretty face will light up, to be sure!'

The two return to the orchard, and there Martha makes Dennis again tell her of the past. She never tires of listening to his accounts of all that has happened. Somehow the sight of that empty sleeve has touched her heart, and to her Dennis has become a hero.

Yes, Gerald's directions have been thus far faithfully carried out, and all is now prepared for their consummation. To-day, Yarrick is in a state of suppressed excitement; the villagers gather in knots to discuss the subject of which their minds are full, and make frequent pilgrimages to the church and the Vicarage. The nearest railway station lies nine miles distant, and the train which bears the Vicar and his little daughter is timed to arrive at seven o'clock. Harry Winn has been delegated to drive over and meet them, and he feels much as an ambassador charged with a delicate mission; has he not to keep from their ears the news of what has happened, and this for two long hours, when interrogations are like to be plentiful and varied? Feeling the weight of his responsibility, he restlessly paces the stable-yard for a full hour before starting-time, and there rehearses a sufficiency of replies to meet contingencies. The hour passes, the journey from Yarrick is accomplished, and Winn drives into the station-yard, where, during the ten minutes he has to wait, his trepidation increases. Finally the train glides up to the platform, and then does the eye of Jehu grow feverish, for he sees the Vicar and Ella alight and make towards him. Greeting takes place, the two mount and settle down, Robin responds to a flick of the whip, and the start is made. As they drive past the flying hedgerows to the music of clicking hoofs, the two feast their eyes on the old familiar spots, which reappear in quick succession, and occupy their tongues in passing comments of an exclamatory kind upon them. So all goes well. Winn's nervousness is not noticed; and with an indescribable sense of relief he feels that Yarrick is being neared.

'I should like to have a glimpse of the church in the fading light; wouldn't yeu, Sunbeam?'

'O yes, papa.'

'Drive round by the lower road, Winn.'

Harry is dumfounded; he pulls up Robin with a jerk, and gazes helplessly into the Vicar's face.

'The lower road,' the Vicar repeats, indicating the direction with a movement of the hand.

For a moment Harry's tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, then he rises to the occasion. 'But think o' Martha Prout, sir! She's a-dyin' to see Miss Ella.' The tone of sympathy is touching to hear.

The Vicar regards him in some surprise, but Ella comes to the rescue. 'Dear old Martha! She thinks the tea will spoil. Don't let us disappoint her, papa. She will let us out afterwards, if we do justice to it.'

The Vicar laughs softly. 'All right, Winn,' he says; 'drive home.' And Harry does so, feeling that his stratagem has succeeded.

As they drive through Yarrick, beaming smiles on every side from the villagers who are standing about greet their return. The Vicar has a kindly word for each. Noticing, after a time, the marked manner in which they stand and gaze, he turns to Winn and asks: 'Is the village holiday-making?'

Winn feels that so near home he can afford to take the question calmly. 'No; they an't 'zactly holiday-making, sir,' he says; then he relapses, chuckling inwardly. There, sure enough, is Martha, waiting on the steps to welcome them. Ella bounds forward, and throws her arms about her neck. 'O Martha, we are so glad to get back home to you!' And the Vicar takes her hand kindly and says: 'That we are, Martha.' Chattering merrily the while, they enter the parlour, and sit down to the meal which Martha has prepared for them. There is a stillness in the air; the evening shadows have lengthened, and through the open window come harvest scents, wafted from the ricks. When the meal is nearly finished, Martha re-enters the room, and says demurely: 'Please sir, there's some un waiting as says he'd like to see you when you've done tea.'

'Who is it, Martha?'

The ambassadress smoothes her apron, and says: 'Please sir, I an't to say.'

The fairy presiding at the tea-urn arrests the progress to her mouth of a slice of bread-and-butter; and the Vicar looks up bewildered. 'You are not to say?'

'No sir.'

'Well—a—shew him in, Martha.'

But, before Martha can turn, Dennis has entered. For a moment he pauses, a little overcome now that his mission is approaching so nearly to its completion. Martha quietly turns, and leaves the room unobserved; a minute later she has thrown her shawl over her head, and is speeding along towards the church. As she walks, the good soul wipes her eyes softly with her apron; the face of the lad whom she had tended and scolded and loved in the old days, comes back very vividly to her just now.

And as the light had fallen on the figure of the maimed soldier, the emotional little lady at the tea-urn had sprung up and run towards him. 'Is it really you, Denny?' she says.

The Vicar too has risen, and grasping his hand, is gazing earnestly into his face. 'We are right glad to see you back, Ladbrook. Welcome once more to Yarrick!'

And they lead him to a chair, and make much of him. Seated there by the oriel window, gazing out over the flower-garden to the familiar meadows, they listen to his words, making him begin at the very beginning, and recount his adventures step by step. And when he comes to speak of Cawnpore, his hearers know that he is about to tell of the death of him he loved so well. In homely language Denny paints the scene, and the Vicar's cheeks flush as he hears of that last gallant burst into the bristling bayonets. 'Brave lad!' he says, rising in his excitement. 'From the moment he spoke to me on that night when the belfry fell, I knew that he would do!' Then Denny tells of the discovery of the prostrate figure; and looking up, says that he is come to bear a message.

What is it that causes the Vicar to start suddenly to his feet; that causes his face for a moment to pale, and then sends the blood coursing back to his cheeks? Wafted to his ears on the perfume-laden air come the sweet sounds as of old, the melody he loves. As one dreaming, he turns slowly round to Dennis; the faithful fellow's head is bowed, and for a moment he cannot speak. When he regains his voice, he whispers huskily: 'Twas the last thing he said: "Tell the Vicar I thought of him listening to my bells!"'

By the tower of Yarrick church the ground slopes westward in a series of gentle undulations. Below, and skirting the churchyard, is a great belt of firs; and beyond these may be caught the gleam of the waters of Boardsey. On this spot there is a little monument, whose inscription simply tells how one Gerald Herrick fell fighting for his country in the trenches of Cawnpore. Here—most often when the sun is flushing the western sky with glory as it sinks to rest—two figures may be seen, tending the roses which cling so tenderly to the stone. The one, a fair-haired maiden, is she who was formerly known as Little Sunbeam; the other is the maimed soldier, Dennis Ladbrook.

#### SOME STRANGE AVOCATIONS.

STRANGE are the shifts to which humanity is sometimes put to earn the wherewithal to supply its daily needs; and many are the ways of getting a living not to be found catalogued in any known list of trades. Few are the ills to which flesh is heir for which a remedy or palliative may not be obtained, if one only knows where to seek it. For instance, what a medical witness lucidly described as a 'contusion of the integuments under the orbit, with extravasation of blood, and ecchymosis of the surrounding cellular tissue,' may now be so deftly manipulated as to defy observation, by having recourse to a professor of the art of doctoring black-eyes—an avocation recognised by Mr Dickens, in his Dictionary of London, wherein any one unfortunately afflicted with an accidental black-eye, but obliged at the same time to go into society, is advised to betake himself to a certain 'artist in black-eyes,' equal to concealing the most aggravated specimen at a cost of half-a-crown, or double that fee if the patient must be attended at home.

Said a witness under cross-examination: 'I am an Early-caller. I calls different tradesmen



at early hours, from one till half-past five in the morning, and that is how I get my living. I gets up between twelve and one; I goes to bed at six, and sleeps till the afternoon. I calls bakers between one and two—the bakers are the earliest of all! What sort of a living he made is not recorded. A pound a week, we should say, would be the outside figure, and to earn that he would need a couple of scores of customers. The early-caller's fee is well earned, since but for his intervention his clients would often lose a day's pay, if not be thrown out of work altogether, by failing to keep time. —Not so deserving of encouragement are the 'tup-pennies,' carrying on their vocation in those quarters of London where pawnbrokers and poor people abound. They are feminine intermediaries between the pawnbroker and folks anxious to raise a loan upon their belongings, who, rather than transact such business for themselves, are willing to pay twopence for every parcel conveyed to everybody's 'uncle' or redeemed from his clutches. These go-betweens, it is averred, also receive a quarterly commission from the tradesmen they favour with their patronage; and so, one way and another, contrive to make a comfortable living out of their neighbours' necessities.

Convinced that duplicated presents were burdensome and unprofitable possessions to newly married folks, a cute New Yorker hit upon the happy notion of relieving them of such superfluities; and success begetting imitation, there are now some half-dozen traders in the Empire City dealing in wedding-gifts; one limiting his dealings to china; another to silver and plated ware; while all is fish that comes to the net of a third, who keeps a large store ostensibly devoted to the sale of unredeemed pledges. Said this worthy to an inquiring gentleman: 'When a young couple belonging to good families get married, nine times out of ten they find themselves in possession of certain kinds of household stuff enough to last several generations. One bride, for instance, received eight pairs of opera-glasses; of course she did not want them all, and I bought five of them. When a marriage between two rich folks comes off, a list of the presents generally finds its way into the newspapers. I don't go to them as soon as they are married; they'd kick you out of the house if you went on such business for the first few weeks. You have to let them settle down to housekeeping, and find out for themselves how much useless stuff they have got; and even then, the wife generally objects to sell; but after seeing them a few times, they fall in with the idea, and are willing to sell what they don't want; and then a bargain is soon struck. Young married people seldom know the value of the presents they receive, and besides, they cost them nothing, so it is all profit to them.' And probably not far from all profit to the shrewd purchaser, who takes their superfluities off their hands on his own terms.

There are men in Paris, birds of a feather with the chiffonier, who go from hospital to hospital collecting the linseed plasters that have served the turn of doctor and patient; afterwards pressing the oil from the linseed, and disposing of the linen, after bleaching it, to the papermaker. Others make a couple of francs a day by collect-

ing old corks, which being cleaned and pared, fetch, it is said, half a franc per hundred. If this be so, it would be worth somebody's while to go cork-collecting in London and other large towns.

A lady-resident of the Faubourg St-Germain is credited with earning a good income by hatching red, black, and brown ants for pheasant preservers. One Parisian gets his living by breeding maggots out of the foul meats he buys of the chiffoniers, and fattening them up in tin boxes. Another breeds maggots for the special behoof of nightingales; and a third 'marchand d'asticots' boasts of selling between thirty and forty millions of worms every season for piscatorial purposes. He owns a great pit at Montmartre, wherein he keeps his store. Every day his scouts bring him fresh stock, for which he pays them from five to ten pence per pound, according to quality; reselling them to anglers at just double those rates, and clearing thereby something over three hundred pounds a year. No wonder he professes great fondness for his 'children,' as he calls them; although, like other fond fathers, he is ready enough to part with them when opportunity offers.

This curious avocation is not unknown in England. Some twelve years ago we are told, Mr Wells, a fishing-tackle maker of Nottingham, in order to insure a constant supply of bait for his customers, started a farm for the rearing of lobworms, cockspurs, ring-tailed brandlings, and other worms in demand among the disciples of Walton, who abound in the old lace town. To keep his farm stocked, men and boys go out at night collecting worms in the meadows and pastures; a moist warm night yielding from two to six thousand worms. As soon as they are brought in, they are placed in properly selected moss, field-moss for choice, to scour until they become little more than skin—freshly caught worms being too tender for the anglers to handle; while 'when a worm is properly educated, he is as tough as a bit of india-rubber, and behaves as a worm should do when put upon the hook.' When this condition is attained, the worms are packed in moss, and put up in light canvas bags for the market. This worm-merchant does not entirely depend upon the industry of his collectors, but breeds large quantities himself in his own garden: the component parts of his breeding-heap being a secret he not unnaturally keeps to himself.

Ludlow Street, a very unsavoury quarter in New York, is inhabited chiefly, if not wholly, by Poles; living in the smallest of tenements, and given to sharing their limited space with cats, dogs, ducks, and geese. They are the cat-meat—not cat's-meat—purveyors of the city, hunting the streets at night to capture stray cats for conversion into sausages. Three among them especially devote themselves to getting, feeding, and breeding cats for the table. Such cats as are captured by their 'boys,' are carefully sorted; those in good condition being slaughtered at once, while the others are relegated to large boxes, to be fed regularly with a fattening compound. Sometimes the animals are confined in a yard, the walls of which are smeared with something so obnoxious to puss that she will not cross it—a something for which town-gardeners here would give much to know the recipe. Our authority, who

visited a Ludlow Street cat-yard not long ago, says: 'It presented a most amusing spectacle. About a hundred cats of all sizes, colours, and ages were sleeping, eating, quarrelling, and cater-wauling; all grades being represented, from the handsome Angora and Maltese, to the homely back-yard Tom.' When considered fit for eating, the cats are disposed of to 'small butchers' who make a specialty of cat-sausage, and festoon their shop-windows with them; the delectable delicacies having a ready sale, which is ever increasing; those who indulge in them declaring cat-meat superior to any rabbit.

An advertisement in a New York journal offering coloured ladies instruction in French, music, and deportment, sent an inquisitive reporter in search of the advertiser, who proved to be a comely full-blooded negress, talking with the fluency of her kind, but with hardly a trace of negro dialect; thanks to having lived many years in the service of a Creole family in New Orleans, and mixing but little with her own race. Mrs Johnson owned her peculiar business was not so flourishing as it might be, but it was a growing one, and she did not doubt it would prove a paying one in good time; since there was no lack of coloured ladies emulous of the graces and accomplishments of their white sisters, and willing to pay two dollars for an hour's lesson in either branch. Her pupils, she said, 'took hold' of the piano readily enough, but did not care about learning French, being much more anxious to speak English, or 'United States' as she preferred calling it, like white folks. There was not much difficulty in teaching them how to walk, bow, and so on; but it took a deal of patient drilling to cure them of ignoring the *g* in words ending in *ing*, and of saying 'whar,' 'dar' and 'thar,' instead of where and there; while it was especially difficult to teach them the niceties of emphasis and inflection. Nevertheless, she had 'taken the kinks, if not out of the hair, out of the tongue' of many a woman as black as herself, and achieved notable success with a pure negress from Alabama, who was so ashamed of her skin, and so convinced that no white person ever respected a black one, that she always wore a heavy veil when walking in the streets. Mrs Johnson's model pupil, however, was 'a light mulatto, as pretty a girl as you would meet in an hour's walk on Broadway; young, slender, and just as stylish as she can be,' whom her proud preceptress was ready to match against the daughter of any white millionaire for good manners.

Bone-collecting is not an avocation peculiar to the States, but there are nevertheless bone-collectors of various kinds. John-Chinaman, content enough to live and die far away from the land of his birth, has a decided objection to his bones remaining in alien earth. We understand that the Chinese guilds in California employ men to go all over the country, even to Oregon, and across the Sierra Nevada, to collect the bones of their compatriots, which, after being scraped, are carefully rolled in paper, labelled, and despatched to San Francisco, where they remain until enough are accumulated to load a vessel, when they are sent to Hong-kong for final interment. Ships carrying such a cargo can carry nothing else; for when a vessel had a cargo partly of bones and partly of flour, grain, and the like, the eatables

were found unmarketable in China, because of a belief that gaseous emanations permeated them, or from sheer superstition.

The same rule apparently obtains wherever Chinamen go; for in a Melbourne newspaper we read: 'During the month, a party of Chinese, accompanied by a European, have been busily engaged visiting cemeteries in the country districts, exhuming the bones of deceased Chinamen, for the purpose of transmission to China. The bones, after exhumation, are carefully counted, to ascertain that none are absent, and are then tied up in parcels, labelled, and inclosed in boxes with a quantity of written papers and a pack of Chinese playing-cards. Incense and perfumed papers are kept burning during the ceremony. The number of skeletons which have been taken up is very great.'

How the collectors of Chinese bones are remunerated, is more than we know; if they are paid by results, it is to be hoped they are more honest in their dealings than certain contractors who, undertaking to exhume and re-inter the bodies of the Federal soldiers who fell before Petersburg and Richmond, at the rate of eight dollars a body, separated each corpse into four parts, placed each part in a coffin, and received four times their proper reward from the American government!

#### ASTONISHING THE NATIVES.

WHEREVER they go, the soldiers of a Highland regiment generally contrive to astonish the natives. As the famous Forty-second were marching early one morning through a Fantee village, the pipers struck up *Hey, Johnnie Cope*, bringing the people out of their huts in the utmost consternation, in the belief that the Ashantees were on them. As soon as they saw that their awakeners were men of another colour, the villagers sought closer acquaintanceship; but catching sight of the pipers, a stampede took place; and not the boldest among them ventured to come nigh again until the rear of the detachment was clear of the village. Then they followed at a respectful distance, and when the troops halted, the Fantees growing courageous, crowded round, the pipers being the centre of attraction, under the idea that they were officers of great dignity, and the pipes some mysterious instruments for the destruction of the Ashantees. They improvised a war-dance in honour of the bearers, much to the disgust of the pipe-major, who wanted to know 'what he was made a peep-show of for,' and contemptuously asked if they had never seen a kiltie before.

As a rule, Indians do not give such open expression to their feelings. A settler in the Far West giving a little dinner-party, invited thereto a few half-civilised Indians, who displayed a desire to 'go through' the bill of fare. A young chief after eyeing the mustard curiously for some time, helped himself to a good spoonful and swallowed it. He said nothing to betray his astonishment; but despite himself, the tears streamed down his cheeks. An aged chief sitting opposite asked what he was crying about, and was gravely informed he was thinking of his poor old father who died a short time ago. Presently the old fellow took a dip from the mustard-pot, and his

eyes likewise proved too weak or too strong for his will. Then his young friend, in a sympathising tone, inquired the cause of *his* grief. Said the beguiled one: 'I was thinking it was a pity *you* didn't die when your old father did.'

All too readily as the red man takes to fire-water, he cannot comprehend the paleface's taste for hot condiments. Naukum, a Plover Bay Indian in much request by ship-captains as an interpreter, was a fellow of unappeasable curiosity; but he made a point of never expressing surprise at anything. The first time he was inside the engine-room of a steamship, all Naukum said, after thoroughly examining his surroundings, was: 'Too muchee wheel; make man too muchee think.' But he was fated to be astonished once by having some pepper-sauce introduced into his food, and owned to having experienced a new sensation, and not liking it. 'Me stand good deal,' said he; 'but me no stand white man eat fire on his meat.'

Mr Whymper won the admiration of his Alaskan friends by the exhibition of a few of those amusing pyrotechnic toys termed Pharaoh's serpents. Sir Samuel Baker found a galvanic battery a sure source of astonishment in savagdom. At parting with Rot Jamar of Fatiko, the traveller placed the two handles of the apparatus in the hands of that potentate, which gave a shock, and sent him away surprised and delighted; and nothing pleased the king of Unyoro so much as witnessing the effect of electricity upon the members of his court and household, every one of whom was compelled to undergo the operation; Kamrasi insisting upon the operator putting the battery to its utmost power, and going into roars of laughter at the sight of his favourite minister rolling on his back in contortions, without the possibility of letting the torturing handles fall from his grasp.

The author of *Two Years in Fiji* found a scarifier (a kind of cupping-glass) of even greater service to himself, while yielding unbounded delight to the natives. 'Nothing,' he writes, 'was considered more witty by those in the secret than to place this apparently harmless instrument on the back of some unsuspecting native and touch the spring. In an instant twelve lancets would plunge into the swarthy flesh. Then would follow a long-drawn cry, scarcely audible amidst the peals of laughter from the by-standers. As soon as the native recovered from the alarm consequent on the suddenness of this attack, he would ask to have the application repeated perhaps six or seven times. The reason of this was not very evident at first; but I found by-and-by that the operation was considered a wholesome one, and also that the regularity of the marks left on the skin was much admired. At a time of great scarcity, when the natives refused to sell any food, I bethought myself of the scarifier; and by exacting a taro-root from each person who wished to be operated on, succeeded in collecting enough supplies to complete the journey.'

A missionary stationed at one of the South Sea Islands determined to give his residence a coat of whitewash. To obtain this in the absence of lime, coral was reduced to powder by burning. The natives watched the process of burning with interest, believing the coral was being cooked for them to eat. Next morning they beheld the missionary's cottage glittering in

the rising sun white as snow. They danced, they sang, they screamed with joy. The whole island was in commotion. Whitewash became the rage. Happy was the coquette who could enhance her charms by a daub of the white brush. Contentions arose. One party urged their superior rank; another obtained possession of the brush, and valiantly held it against all comers; a third tried to upset the tub to obtain some of the precious cosmetic. To quiet the hubbub, more whitewash was made; and in a week not a hut, a domestic utensil, a war-club, or a garment but was as white as snow; not an inhabitant but had a skin painted with grotesque figures; not a pig that was not whitened; and even mothers might be seen in every direction capering joyously, and yelling with delight at the superior beauty of their whitewashed babies.

### THE ELECTRIC VACUUM TUBE.

THE attention recently directed towards electric illumination has brought again into notice some of the earlier discoveries in connection with this science. One of the most beautiful of these is to be seen in what is termed the vacuum tube. The illuminating power of the electric current in a rarefied atmosphere has been investigated by Grove, Gassiot, Plücher, &c., their labours being much helped by the handiwork of Geissler of Bonn, who carried the art of glass-blowing for philosophical instruments to high perfection. Vacuum apparatus for electrical purposes are now known all over the world as *Geissler's tubes*.

These tubes have at each end a small piece of platinum wire fused into the glass, with a protruding loop of wire outside, so that they may be readily connected with the source of electricity; the air in the closed tube is then exhausted by an aperture made for that purpose, which is afterwards hermetically sealed. Upon connecting the platinum wires with the poles of an intensity coil, the whole interior of the tube is illuminated with a beautiful pink-purple glow, deepening into a rich violet towards the negative pole; whilst the wires throw off minute sparks entirely different in appearance from the well-known blue spark.

As the only absolute requisite in the construction of these tubes is the exclusion of atmospheric air, an infinite variety of forms has been devised. Names may be made of twisted glass, which will burst into light when connected with the coil; and minute traces of different gases, organic and inorganic, will give varying colours under the electric current.

Gassiot's Cascade is composed of a cylinder inclosing a slender vase of uranium glass, having the tube conveying the current descending to nearly the bottom of the vase. As there is no other exit provided for it, the current ascends the sides of the vase, and pours over its edge in a continuous flow of living fire, until it reaches the opposite pole. The beauty of this experiment is enhanced by the fluorescence of the uranium glass

of which the vase is made, under the light from the current.

Another adaptation of electricity inseparably associated with the name of Gassiot, is the electric star. The impression of light remains on the retina for about the one-eighth of a second—a phenomenon commonly known as persistence of vision. A single tube is mounted upon a magnetic rotator, and put in connection with the intensity coil. As the machine revolves, the illuminated tube, through multiplication of impressions upon the retina, becomes a glowing wheel with numberless radiant spokes. Properly conducted, the foregoing experiments are strikingly beautiful.

#### TO MY CANARY.

HALF Nature and half Art art thou,  
Poor city bird;  
Thy birth was not on woodland bough  
With zephyrs stirred.

A little box upon a nail  
Thy life received;  
And I, when others' care did fail,  
Thy wants relieved.

The melody that rippling breaks  
From thy clear throat  
Was not thine own—the skylark makes  
That merry note.

The greater world without thine own  
Is dark to thee;  
Thy golden wings have never known  
Its mystery.

The sun on thee, through cloudless sky,  
Did never smile;  
Dull bricks and mortar have been thy  
Canary Isle.

But if for freedom thou dost sigh,  
My captive pet,  
I'll loose thy wings, and help thee fly  
This cage of fret.

And then, thy airy soul, uplung  
Towards heaven's gate,  
Will sing the song, as yet unsung  
Emancipate!

Say, wilt thou fly the spreading air  
At thy sweet will,  
And never more in captive's fare  
Dip thy free bill?

If so, just chirp one last farewell,  
And hie thee hence,  
And leave me, till passed time dispel  
This present tense.

See! now I throw thy cage-door wide,  
And set thee free.  
Stretch forth thy wings, in conscious pride  
Of liberty.

Thy hops do halt, as if delayed  
By fearful doubt.  
Why hesitant? why so dismayed  
To know you're out?

Hast thou no wish to seek near brooks  
Cool shimmering shade?  
Or dost thou still prefer the nooks  
By joiner made?

Thy years of caged ease have brought  
Such days of dreams,  
That liberty with labour fraught  
Worse bondage seems.

Thou dar'st not go! the wide outside  
Brings thee dismay;  
The airs that thrill the lark's life-tide  
Thy pulses stay.

Then come, my sweet, and safe from harm  
Securely rest,  
And nestling in my bosom, calm  
Thy fluttering breast.

And to this cage, with memories fond,  
Thy voice recall,  
And love shall knit its tenderest bond  
In willing thrall.

F. F.

#### CELLULOID.

A mixture of tissue-paper and camphor chemically treated produces a substance known as celluloid, which is largely manufactured and applied to an always increasing variety of uses. It resembles gum in appearance, is of a light pale brown colour, and can be readily dyed through its whole substance, so as to imitate amber, malachite, tortoise-shell, or coral. When converted into artificial ivory, there is, to an ordinary eye, no difference between it and the real product, and it can be used for pianoforte keys, for handles, rings, ornaments, and so forth, as readily as real ivory, at one-half of the cost. It is convertible into combs, jewelry, watch-cases, thimbles, toe-caps for shoes, parchment, said to be more serviceable for drumheads than real parchment, and into paper, which is afterwards fashioned on an enormous scale into cuffs, collars, and shirt fronts; and attempts are being made to adapt it for use as neckties.

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2d. To insure return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3d. MANUSCRIPTS should bear the author's full Christian name, surname, and address, legibly written; and should be written on one side of the leaf only.

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